

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/PAB:PDCONSTABLE/MW
APPROVED BY NEA - ALFRED L. ATHERTON, JR.
PM - MR. VEST
NSC - MR. OAKLEY (SUBSTANCE)
S/P - MR. THORNTON
S/S: MR. ORTIZ
P - MR. SISCO

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P 242116Z JAN 76 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 018843 TOSEC 010250

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.), MASS, BD, US

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM- BANGLADESH INTEREST IN
MILITARY EQUIPMENT (S/S NO. 7601502)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON THROUGH SISCO

1. THE PROBLEM

YOU REVIEWED NEA'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON MILITARY SALES TO BANGLADESH ON JANUARY 19. YOU INDICATED THAT YOU FAVORED OPTION 1, I.E., THAT WE INFORM THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT WE CANNOT CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR SUPPLY OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT THROUGH THE FMS SYSTEM, BUT THAT WE WOULD CONSIDER ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS LICENSES OF COMMERCIAL SALES OF NON-LETHAL ITEMS SUCH AS COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT THAT WOULD ENHANCE INTERNAL SECURITY CAPABILITIES. YOU ADDED A NOTE THAT WE SHOULD INFORM THE BANGALEES WE

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WOULD CONSIDER SALES OF LETHAL EQUIPMENT LATER.

2. DISCUSSION

WE HAVE REDRAFTED THE INSTRUCTION TO EMBASSY DACCA TO CONVEY A SOMEWHAT MORE POSITIVE TONE AND WE DO NOT EXPLICITLY RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SALES OF LETHAL EQUIPMENT AT SOME FUTURE DATE. HOWEVER, WE STRONGLY BELIEVE IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE AT THIS TIME TO CONVEY ANY POSITIVE HOPE TO THE BANGALEES OF FUTURE LETHAL SALES BECAUSE:

-- THE BANGALEES WOULD INTERPRET THE POSSIBILITY OF LETHAL SALES--NO MATTER HOW GUARDED--AS INDICATING A WILLINGNESS ON OUR PART TO PROVIDE GREATER SUPPORT FOR THEIR SECURITY THAN WE IN FACT ARE ABLE TO DO.

-- THE RESULT COULD BE A MORE INTRANSIGENT AND PROVOCATIVE POSTURE VIS-A-VIS INDIA.

-- THE INDIANS MIGHT WELL LEARN OF THE AMBIGUITY IN OUR POSITION AND CONCLUDE THAT IT PORTENDS A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH BANGLADESH WHICH WAS ANTI-INDIAN IN NATURE AND CONTRARY TO THE ASSURANCES YOU HAVE GIVEN FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN.

-- THE UPSHOT COULD BE TO INTENSIFY INDIAN INCENTIVE TOWARD DIRECT INTERVENTION IN BANGLADESH OR MANEUVERS TO OVERTHROW THE PRESENT REGIME THERE, WHILE ADDING NOTHING TO THE REAL SECURITY OF BANGLADESH.

-- IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT THERE WOULD BE A NEGATIVE REACTION TO ARMS SALES FROM THE CONGRESS, WHERE THERE IS A STRONG FEELING THAT BANGLADESH SHOULD DEVOTE MAXIMUM RESOURCES TO DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES.

WE THEREFORE BELIEVE IT IS PREFERABLE AT THIS TIME TO RESERVE OUR OPTIONS ON LETHAL SALES, NEITHER RULING THEM OUT NOR INDICATING THAT WE WOULD CONSIDER THEM. A TELEGRAM TO EMBASSY DACCA IS ATTACHED TO CONVEY OUR VIEWS. IF, HOWEVER, YOU PREFER A FORMULATION TO INFORM THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT EXPLICITLY THAT WE WILL CONSIDER LETHAL

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ARMS SALES IN THE FUTURE, WE WILL PREPARE A NEW DRAFT.

3. RECOMMENDATION:

THAT YOU APPROVE THE ATTACHED TELEGRAM TO EMBASSY DACCA.

-- APPROVE -- DISAPPROVE

ALTERNATIVELY: THAT NEA PREPARE A NEW DRAFT TO CONVEY SPECIFICALLY TO THE BDG OUR WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER LETHAL SALES AT A LATER DATE.

-- APPROVE -- DISAPPROVE

4. ATTACHMENT - SECRET/EXDIS CABLE TO DACCA:

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH INTEREST IN MILITARY HARDWARE

1. WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO DISCOURAGE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGULAR U.S. ARMS SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH BANGLADESH. IN DEVELOPING THIS POSITION WE DRAW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN "ARMS SALES" AND AN "ARMS SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP". THE FORMER IS NOT ENTIRELY EXCLUDED, BUT WE CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OFFICIAL USG-BDG ARMS SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP TO BE INCONSISTENT WITH U.S. POLICY AND INTERESTS IN BANGLADESH. IN SPECIFIC TERMS WE WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO CONSIDER ANY REQUESTS FOR SALES THROUGH THE FMS SYSTEM. FYI: BANGLADESH IS NOT NOW ELIGIBLE FOR FMS SALES AND PROCEDURES TO MAKE IT ELIGIBLE INVOLVE A PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION AND NOTIFICATION TO THE CONGRESS. END FYI.

2. SHOULD THE BDG WISH TO PROCURE EQUIPMENT AND MATERIEL FOR ITS ARMED FORCES THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS, THESE SALES WOULD BE CONSIDERED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS AS EXPORT LICENSES WERE REQUESTED. FOR THE PRESENT TIME, WE WOULD WANT TO KEEP THE FOCUS ON "NON-LETHAL" EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR INTERNAL SECURITY, SUCH AS COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT. THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, STRATEGIC INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS SALES GROUP COULD ASSIST IN MAKING THE APPROPRIATE COMMERCIAL CONTACTS FOR INQUIRIES RE EQUIPMENT AND SALES.

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3. FYI: WE OF COURSE MAINTAIN THE OPTION OF EXPANDING SALES INTO ITEMS BEYOND THE "NON-LETHAL" CATEGORY INTENDED FOR INTERNAL SECURITY PURPOSES, IF AT SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE WE BELIEVE IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO DO SO. HOWEVER, FOR THE PRESENT WE WANT TO AVOID ANY IMPLICATION THAT WE INTEND TO INCREASE U.S. POLITICAL OR SECURITY SUPPORT FOR BANGLADESH THROUGH MILITARY SALES--AN IMPLICATION THAT COULD COMPLICATE RATHER THAN EASE SECURITY PROBLEMS FOR BANGLADESH. END FYI.

4. IN DESCRIBING THE ABOVE POLICY IN PARA 2 TO FOREIGN SECRETARY, YOU MAY WISH TO POINT OUT THAT IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WE WISH TO MAINTAIN A CLEAR FOCUS ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND POPULATION PROGRAMS. WE DO NOT WANT TO DILUTE SUPPORT FOR THESE

PROGRAMS IN CONGRESS BY ESTABLISHING A POTENTIALLY CONTROVERSIAL ARMS SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH BANGLADESH.

5. CLEARED: PM - MR. VEST; NSC - MR. OAKLEY (SUBSTANCE);
S/P - MR. THORNTON. SISCO

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NNN

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